

REMARKS

Claims 9-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-8 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, claims 9-13 are amended, and claims 17-20 are added. Claims 9-13 are amended for clarity. Support for new claims 17 and 18 may be found at least at paragraphs [0091]-[0095] of the specification and in Figs. 4(a), 4(b) and 5. Support for new claims 19 and 20 may be found at least at paragraph [0190] of the specification and in Figs. 6-9. No new matter is added. In view of at least the following, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

I. Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112

The Office Action rejects claims 9-15 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph for indefiniteness. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

With respect to claim 9, at line 6, the Office Action asserts that "configured to rotatably supporting said toroidal building drum" is grammatically awkward and confusing.

By this amendment, claim 9 is amended to recite "configured to support said toroidal building drum in a rotatable manner around a main axis."

Also, by this amendment, claim 9 is amended to replace "building unit" with "first building unit." The "first building unit" of claim 10 now recites "second building unit," to retain the logical relationship between the claims and to be definite.

With respect to claim 10, the Office Action asserts that "said building unit as a second building unit" is awkward and confusing. By this amendment, this clause has been replaced with "first building unit."

Please note that with reference to the specification, the "first building unit" of the claims can refer to the "second building unit" of the specification and drawings, and the "second building unit" of the claims can refer to the "first building unit" of the specification and drawings.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

II. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102 and §103

The Office Action rejects claims 9-13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over JP 2002-254529 (Nakatani) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,443,290 (Loeffler); rejects claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Nakatani; rejects claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Nakatani in view of Loeffler and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,702,912 (Oku) and U.S. Patent No. 6,508,640 (Irie); and rejects claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Nakatani in view of Loeffler in view of Oku and Irie and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,196,819 (Mitamura) or JP 08-281655 (Irie-Japan) or JP 2002-337148 (Ito). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants respectfully submit that Nakatani and Loeffler fail to teach or render obvious "workstations configured to mount applicable tire components onto a tire in the course of building and having the bead cores locked by said toroidal building drum," as recited in independent claim 9; and that Nakatani fails to teach or render obvious "disposing a cylindrical carcass band and a pair of bead cores onto a toroidally scalable toroidal building drum to thereby lock the bead cores," as recited in independent claim 16.

With respect to independent claim 16, the Examiner asserts that Nakatani teaches each and every feature of claim 16, and with respect to independent claim 9, the Office Action asserts that Nakatani teaches almost each and every feature of the independent claim. The Nakatani reference is disclosed and discussed by Applicants in at least paragraphs [0015] and [0016] of the specification. In particular, Applicants submit the Nakatani reference merely relates to "a tire building system [that is] configured to bulgingly deform an axial center portion of a cylindrical carcass band, and then to move a tire in the course of building through a plurality of workstations while holding the bulged portion by a core device, so as to mount applicable tire components onto an outside of the carcass band at the respective stations."

However, because "the tire components are successively mounted onto the tire in the course of building in a state that bead cores are not held by a building drum, resulting in deviation of relative positions of the bead cores and tire components from one another, thereby problematically failing to manufacture a tire with high precision," as discussed in the present specification, Loeffler fails to cure the deficiencies of Nakatani.

Thus, the applied references, taken alone or in any combination, fail to teach or render obvious each and every feature of independent claims 9 and 16.

Claims 10-15 depend from claim 9. Because the applied references fail to anticipate or render obvious the features recited in independent claim 9, dependent claims 10-15 are patentable for at least the reasons that claim 9 is patentable, as well as for the additional features they recite.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

III. New Claims

Claims 17-20 depend from claims 9 and 16. Because the applied references fail to anticipate or render obvious the features recited in independent claims 9 and 16, dependent claims 17-20 are patentable for at least the reasons that claims 9 and 16 are patentable, as well as for the additional features they recite.

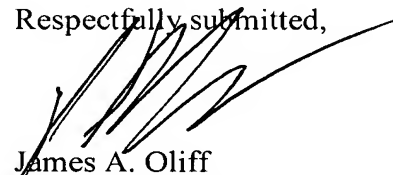
Accordingly, allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


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Date: August 31, 2009

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